Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)

Michigan Student Data System (MSDS)

Technical Support Document

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Questions?
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Introduction

The following documentation is designed to supplement the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) "help" documentation. Both documents should be reviewed prior to the accessing MSDS. Successful use of the system may require work from both the user and the school's local technical support staff. There are some steps to perform in preparation for using the application that may require technical assistance.
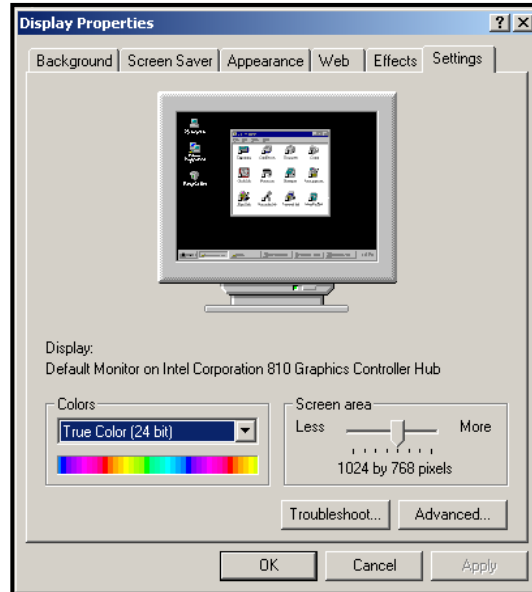
Browser and System Suggestions

Internet Explorer (5.5 or higher) is the preferred browser for all CEPI applications. While it is possible to use a Firefox (1.5 – 3.0) browser to access CEPI applications, please be advised that these applications do not function as well in Firefox as they do in Internet Explorer. For example, many Firefox users report that pages format improperly or the appearance of data is not preserved when using the "back" and "forward" buttons. The problem is not with the application, but with the functionality built inside the Firefox browser.

For best performance, view the application with a monitor resolution of 800 X 600 or higher.

If necessary, Windows users can change the resolution of their monitors by going to the **START** button, selecting **SETTINGS**, then **CONTROL PANEL**, then **DISPLAY, and then selecting the Settings tab**. You may also place your mouse pointer on the desktop (on the background, not on an icon), click the right mouse button and choose **PROPERTIES**.

Go to the **Desktop Area** setting, and slide the screen resolution over to 800 x 600. It is recommended that you do not try a higher desktop resolution than this until you have read your monitor manual to see what maximum resolution it supports.

Pop-up Blockers

CEPI makes use of pop-up windows in its applications to display important information for authorized users. If your computer has a pop-up blocker installed, it may prevent a CEPI application window from opening. Many pop-up blockers allow users to reconfigure software settings to allow pop-up windows from certain Web sites. If the pop-up blocker installed on your computer does not have this feature, please seek assistance from your local technical support staff. Another option would be to disable the pop-up blocker on your computer while you are accessing CEPI applications.

If you are not sure if pop-up-blocking software is installed on your computer, please run a test by visiting pop-uptest.com.

Listed below are some common pop-up blockers, as well as links to their support pages. Locate your software in the list below and then follow the link for more information about how to configure the software to allow pop-up windows when using CEPI applications. If you require further assistance, discuss this issue with your technical support staff.

- FireFox Web Browser
- Google Toolbar
- Microsoft Windows XP (SP2)
- Norton Internet Security
- Panicware Pop-Up Stopper
- StopZilla
- Yahoo! Toolbar
- Zone Alarm (user forum)

Web Services Plan

MSDS is using a phased development process. While the initial launch of the system in October 2008 will not include Web services, future phases will.

Authentication and Security

MSDS will utilize the Michigan Single Sign-On for user authentication, which is in the final stages of development. When it is active, a user will be notified to create an account with the system. Once an account is established users will be able to subscribe to applications he or she is allowed to access. Current Single Record Student Database (SRSD) users utilizing Michigan Education Information System (MEIS) accounts will be able to link their current user profiles. New users will have to complete the security agreement form to access the system.

A note to users: once a session begins within the application, it can only be ended by closing the browser when completed.

Using XML Documents

XML files downloaded from the applications may be imported into a Microsoft Access database or Microsoft Excel, if desired (version XP or higher). In addition there are a large selection of commercial and freeware XML applications available beyond the Microsoft Office products. No matter which application is used to view the XML file, formatting may vary depending on the contents of your XML data file, but the fields will be labeled appropriately. Resource guides on how to utilize Microsoft Office applications to view XML data are listed below:

- Importing Data in Microsoft Excel 2007:
  http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP102064051033.aspx?pid=CH100648521033

- Importing Data in Microsoft Excel 2003:
  http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP010423511033.aspx?pid=CH010503791033

- Importing Data in Microsoft Access 2007:
  http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?AssetID=RC102722321033

- Importing Data in Microsoft Access 2003:
  http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/access/HP051876101033.aspx?pid=CH063648351033

Open-Source Software Issues

As open-source software packages such as OpenOffice.org become more prevalent, your local education agency (LEA) may choose to utilize this product. Please note that the State of Michigan produces and tests office documents using Microsoft Office 2003 and does not test files for OpenOffice.org compatibility. While the majority of files and formatting will work between these applications, they will not be perfect in every case. Check the OpenOffice.org Web site for news of future releases and additional compatibility issues.